



An explanation of Ultra Processed Foods as defined by the NOVA food classifications

Understanding the groups

Group 1 consists of both **unprocessed** and **minimally processed** foods

Unprocessed – definition: -

“Are obtained directly from plants or animals and do not undergo any alteration following their removal from nature”

Minimally processed foods definition

“Foods are natural foods that have been submitted to cleaning, removal of inedible or unwanted parts, fractioning, grinding, drying, fermentation, pasteurization, cooling, freezing, or other processes that may subtract part of the food, but which do not add oils, fats, sugar, salt or other substances to the original food”

Examples of Group 1 foods include: -

- Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables
- Dried fruit (not in oil or with added sugar)
- Meat, fish, poultry, seafood and eggs
- Plain yogurt
- Milk
- Nuts and seeds
- Herbs and spices
- Tea, coffee and plain water

Group 2 processed culinary ingredients – definition

“These are products extracted from natural foods or from nature by processes such as pressing, grinding, crushing, pulverizing, and refining. They are used in homes and restaurants to season and cook food”

Examples of Group 2 foods include: -

- Salted butter
- Sugar
- Oils from crushed olives or seeds
- Honey extracted from honeycombs
- Butter
- Corn starch
- Coconut fat

Group 3 processed foods – definition

“Group 3 are products manufactured by industry with the use of salt, sugar, oil or other substances (Group 2) added to natural or minimally processed foods (Group 1) to preserve or to make them more palatable”

Examples of Group 3 foods include: -

- Tinned vegetables
- Salted/cured meats
- Tinned fish
- Tomato paste/puree
- Fermented alcoholic drinks (e.g. beer and wine)
- Freshly made cheeses
- Salted nuts

Group 4 Ultra Processed Foods

“UPF’s are industrial formulations made entirely or mostly from substances extracted from foods (oils, fats, sugar, starch, and proteins), derived from food constituents (hydrogenated fats and modified starch), or synthesized in laboratories from food substrates or other organic sources (flavour enhancers, colours, and several food additives used to make the product hyper-palatable). Manufacturing techniques include extrusion, moulding and pre-processing by frying. Beverages may be ultra-processed. Group 1 foods are a small proportion of, or are even absent from, ultra-processed products.

- Biscuits
- Chocolates and sweets
- Fizzy drinks
- Pre-prepared/package meat
- Pre-prepared/package pizza and pasta dishes
- Pre-prepared/package burgers and hot dogs (some sausages, you can source good ones from a butcher)
- Energy/sports drinks
- Dairy drinks (milkshakes etc)
- Margarine & spreads
- Instant soups, noodles, desserts (packet mixes of foods)
- Sweetened juices
- Breakfast cereals (most but not all)
- Pastries, cakes, cake mixes
- Packaged breads
- sweetened and flavoured yogurts, including fruit yogurts
- other animal products made from remnants
- baked products made with ingredients such as hydrogenated vegetable fat, sugar, yeast, whey, emulsifiers, and other additives
- ice cream and frozen desserts
- fatty, sweet, savoury or salty packaged snacks
- Meal replacement shakes (many but not all)